

## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: James Koo

James Koo, the son of Korean immigrants Young-wha Koo and Bong-hark Lee Koo, was born June 14, 1920 on the island of Lānaʻi. He spent the first four years of his life in Lahaina, Maui, then his family moved to Oʻahu. His father, who had contracted Hansen's Disease in Lahaina, was confined to the Hansen's Disease hospital in Kalihi, before being taken to Kalaupapa, Molokaʻi. Koo's mother subsequently remarried.

He grew up in Pālama and attended Kalihi and Pālama area elementary schools, Kalākaua Intermediate School and McKinley High School. He received his bachelor's degree 1952 from the University of Hawaiʻi.

As an elementary school student Koo remembers first going to Pālama Settlement for the Strong-Carter Dental Clinic. He began participating in athletics at Pālama at the age of twelve and continued his interest in sports at Pālama until about 1950. As a high school student he worked at the settlement under the National Youth Administration program, and as a college student he was in charge of the recreation room and ran the scouting program.

During World War II he worked at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard as a storekeeper. He was drafted after the war ended. He returned to his job at Pearl Harbor after serving in the U.S. Army.

In 1981 he retired from Pearl Harbor where he was in charge of data processing for the supply center. He is married and has four children.

Tape No. 27-38-4-98

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

James Koo (JK)

January 12, 1998

'Aiea, O'ahu

BY: Holly Yamada (HY)

HY: This is an interview with James Koo for the Pālama Settlement project. It's January 12, 1998, and the interviewer is Holly Yamada. [The interview took place at JK's home in 'Aiea.]

Let's just start off with when were you born? What's your birth date?

JK: I was born June 14, 1920.

HY: And where you were born?

JK: I was born in Kō'ele, Lāna'i, Hawai'i.

HY: Were you raised in Lāna'i?

JK: I was born on Lāna'i, but upon my birth, my mother [Bong-hark Lee Koo] decided that it was not the place for her. So they moved to Lahaina, where I spend the first four years of my life.

HY: Do you have any memories of Lahaina?

JK: Lahainaluna—I remember living in the camp, with mango trees surrounding the camp. We used to go from up on the hillside where we lived, down the hill to Kamehameha III School for Sunday school. I was too young yet, four years old, to go to school. But (for) Sunday school, we go down the hill. I had an older sister. She and I used to make that little trip down the hill, and back up the hill after Sunday school. Interesting.

HY: You have any other siblings?

JK: Yeah, I had three sisters and three brothers. My older sister was a half sister, different father. Two blood-related sisters, one brother, and two stepbrothers. I should have said one stepsister, really.

HY: Do you remember what your mom was doing in Lāna'i?

JK: No, I don't. I assume that she—since coming over—I assume that she was just a housewife.

HY: And what was your father [Young-wha Koo] doing?

JK: My father worked in the pineapple fields.

HY: And then, what did they do then in Lānaʻi, excuse me, in Lahaina? Do you remember?

JK: Lahaina, he worked in the cane fields as an irrigation (laborer).

HY: And then, did you come to this island then?

JK: Yeah, we moved over to. . . . I guess my mother was the one that instigated the move to Honolulu because she didn't care for the plantation life that she was living. She thought she'd better off on a bigger island (chuckles). So we must have moved back to Honolulu, where we've lived ever since.

HY: What part of Honolulu did you folks move to?

JK: That's an interesting. . . . I remember living in (pause), I guess it's Kukui and Hall street[s]. Yeah, Hall Street was next to Liliha [Street]. So it was kinda close right where Pālama [Settlement] was. At that time, Pālama was down at the corner of King [Street] and Dillingham [Boulevard] before they moved. I don't recall too much of those days except that we were associated with The Salvation Army. And we used to go around Saturday nights, tambourine, making big noise, singing songs around the corners, you know, going down to—actually, from Kukui, down Hall Street. . . . Must be King. Come around Liliha Street. Do you know the places I'm talking about?

HY: Little bit, yeah.

JK: I remember that because I think we were being sponsored by The Salvation Army at that time. And from there, we must have moved to someplace in Pālama, where Pua Lane comes up? It comes up from King Street and weaves its way up to where Pālama football field is. We lived about the middle before. There was long (pause) tenement-type homes.

HY: What did they look like?

JK: I'm trying to find a word. Just like, well, there was a long row of homes attached to each other. It's like. . . . Tsk, memory, getting too old.

HY: Did you share facilities with the other families?

JK: No, see, you had the individual unit, but the units were attached to each other. You had a kitchen, and living room, and bedroom. So at that time, we were with my mother, my father, my sister, two sisters, [and one brother]. There were six of us.

HY: And this was a one-bedroom?

JK: Oh, I don't even know whether we all lived in one room or not. But at that time we were going to Ka'iulani School. Must be first grade 'cause I remember kindergarten. . . . Trying to remember the name of the kindergarten. I think was called Nalei Kindergarten [and Preschool].

It was located where the fire station is on King Street, right in the back of it. We didn't stay there too long. We moved to Kalihi, where I went to another kindergarten. From that kindergarten—I don't even know the name of the kindergarten—from there, went to Kalihi Kai School, first (and) second grade. We were living somewhere in Kalihi then. And my mother just decided to move (back) to Pālāma. I think she met my stepfather then.

My father contracted leprosy when he was working in Lahaina. So he had to come to Honolulu. He was in the hospital at Kalihi. From there, he decided that the best thing for him to do was to go to Kalaupapa leper settlement on Moloka'i, where he could earn some money to send to my mother and take care the family, or help take care.

My mother used to work for Hawaiian [Pineapple Company] cannery.

HY: Your mother did?

JK: Yeah.

HY: You remember what type of work your father had after he . . .

JK: All I know was, when he was in Kalaupapa, he grew vegetables and sold it. So, whether he sold it outside of the settlement to the people in Moloka'i, I don't know. Or whether it was in-house, retail.

HY: Were you folks allowed to visit him or was he allowed to come back?

JK: I guess we were allowed to visit him, but it was a trip, so we never did. I never saw my father after that.

HY: Do you have any recollections of your grandparents—just to go way back?

JK: No. My grandparents were all in Korea, so we never did make a trip back there.

HY: Were your parents born and raised in Hawai'i?

JK: No, my parents, my mother and my dad were from Korea.

HY: So they came here . . .

JK: My father, I think, was one of the first ones here from Korea. My mother was one of the picture brides that were sent for. Actually, that's how she met my sister's father. He was her sponsor, claiming that he was a young, good-looking, wealthy man. When she came over here, [he] was a old, decrepit (chuckles) man. But she had no choice. So she stayed with him and had a baby. No, she was pregnant when he died. He died on her. She met my father then. My father married her. So we never knew for a while that she was my [half] sister until my mother told us one day that her father was so-and-so fellow. His was Chung, not Koo.

When we were about to enter the third grade from Kalihi, that's when we moved back to Pālāma. And we entered the third grade at Ka'iulani School. From Ka'iulani we went to Kalākāua [Intermediate School]. From Kalākāua to McKinley [High School]. And all this time



while we were going to school, at those schools, we lived in Pālama.

HY: What street did you live on?

JK: Pua Lane. From Pua Lane we moved to Pua Lane [and then] we moved to Pua Lane. (HY laughs.) But you move around because the old folks were always looking for something cheaper. So it was quite a while before—in fact, I didn't move out of Pālama until after the war started, World War II. Where I borrowed a thousand dollars as down payment for a home up in Pu'unui. But, see, I was working now. Two weeks after the war started I got a job in Pearl Harbor. So, I had to borrow the down payment for the home, and then took care of the mortgage payment. In the meantime, my mother had remarried. Her (third) husband (was my father). In fact, her (fourth) husband died on her after he gave her two boys.

HY: Did you live with this stepfather?

JK: Yeah, yeah. In fact, when I got married, that was [at age] nineteen. . . . That was my first wife. I guess you kinda figured out already. (Chuckles) We lived together with my family until we moved out maybe three, four years later. Saved a few bucks and. . . .

HY: Can you describe the house that you lived in on Pua Lane?

JK: Besides the one that I tried to . . .

HY: Well, the three---I guess, several different places you lived at on that street.

JK: Let me try to do this chronologically. The long houses. . . . One house down at 'Īao Lane. I-A-O, 'Īao Lane. . . . Then [we moved to] Alapa'i Street. Then we moved to one of four homes in a court [on Pua Lane], which was right next to Pālama football field. We lived there until I was fourteen, I think. Then we moved to 'Īao Lane, which was near Likelike School. From there, we must have moved back to Pālama, Desha Lane, until the war started. In 1942, I guess, '42, or '43, I moved up to Pu'unui. That's when we bought the home. Then after that I got married.

HY: Did you buy that first home for your family or had you gotten married at that point?

JK: No, for my family.

HY: For your family.

JK: Where did I move to? I think (pause), oh, from there I moved to Kalihi Valley with my wife and family. I had two boys then.

HY: Just going back again to the Pālama area, you said your mom at that point was working at [the] cannery, is that right?

JK: Right.

HY: Do you remember what your stepfather was doing?

- JK: Well, he worked for Honolulu Iron Works [Company]. He was an old-timer there. There were iron works down on the waterfront. He died in—must be '34, 'cause I was fourteen years old, '34.
- HY: Maybe you could talk a little bit about just your home life. You know, if you had chores to do or help your mom?
- JK: Well, being the oldest boy in the family, I had certain privileges. My mother always told me to take care of your sisters and your younger brother. So I felt I was the disciplinarian in the family. Don't let anybody go astray. Make sure my sisters met the right guy. In fact, my youngest sister, not my oldest sister, my youngest sister was going with a guy who I didn't like. I tried to tell her the guy is no good, he's a gambler. But she insisted that he was the guy that she was going to marry (chuckles), which she eventually did. But my role in the family, I think, was as a disciplinarian because nobody was home most of the time. My mother was working. My stepfather was working. Of course, when he entered the picture, my chores were lessened. I would tell him what my sisters were going to do.
- HY: How old were you when your mother remarried?
- JK: I'm trying to think of when I was going to school in Kalihi-Waena [School], from Kalihi when I was in first or second grade. I was six or seven years old. So I was eight when I went to Ka'iulani [School] and I was in Pua Lane then. We didn't stay too long at the first place in Pua Lane. We moved to Alapa'i Street. But we didn't stay there too long because after Evelyn, my sister, died, he decided to move back to Pua Lane. This was where we were one of four houses in a court, right in the back of Pālama. Not to answer the question that you asked.
- HY: But you were in elementary school, still, when she remarried then?
- JK: I was in elementary school when she remarried. I would say, about the second grade. The first time when she first remarried. You're going to have a hard time getting this together chronologically.
- HY: That's okay. Don't worry about that.
- JK: Ask questions and I'll try to. . . .
- HY: (Chuckles) Okay, you were talking about you were kinda the disciplinarian, but when she remarried you didn't have to do as many chores?
- JK: Right, right. That's when I started to get into trouble, I guess. (Chuckles) That whole time.
- HY: Okay. What kind of trouble did you get into?
- JK: Well, I guess staying out late type [of thing] and all of that. Went out with the young boys, you know. We were what? Eight, nine, ten years old, eh? Not even teenagers, but I guess the situation was about the same for most of us. Both the parents worked. The kids were left by themselves. So you get into mischief very easily. Nothing was serious. We got caught by, or were under the care of, truant officers, probation officers, and we were afraid of them, you

know. Somebody says, "Probation officer," and so, boom, the kid take off, (chuckles) hide. 'Cause we thought whatever we did, some of it must have been wrong. Because we felt it was wrong.

HY: So you had respect for . . .

JK: Elders, yeah. We had. When they told us what to do, we tried to do what they told us. But sometimes we---we don't think it was mischievous. We thought it was just doing something that we needed to do.

HY: What kinds of things would you do, I guess, playing with the other kids. What kinds of things would you do?

JK: Well, we played in the fields. There were some open fields before Vineyard Street was opened up—I can't say fishponds but taro patch. I guess they were probably old taro patch fields. They had fishes, catfish. We go and steal those things. But we stole those things because we wanted to eat them, and there's no other way but go steal 'em.

HY: So you brought 'em home?

JK: Yeah. No questions asked. Cook 'em.

HY: (Chuckles) Do you remember who were some of the kids you played with? Do you remember?

JK: Well. . . .

HY: Around that neighborhood?

JK: I had a good friend (whose name was Francis Sing). He and I grew up together because we went to together everywhere practically ever since when we went to school. When you saw him, you saw me. Trying to think how. . . . 'Cause we were. . . . Must have been at least twelve years old when he and I went together. We played sports together. We went to shows together. I even tailed around him when we was dating his girlfriend. But we did practically everything together.

HY: When you say you went to the shows together, do you mean movies?

JK: Yeah, movies, movies. Pālama used to have a open-air theater on King Street. Across of where Pua Lane starts. And in open-air we used to go during the evening. When they broke that down and built a theater, we used to go in the afternoon. Save our lunch money and go to the show in the afternoon.

HY: Was that Pālama Theatre that they built there?

JK: Pālama Theatre. But since they raised their prices on us, the only way we could afford to go to the movie was to work there. So we applied for jobs, sweeper jobs. Between shows we'd sweep the place down, especially in the lobby. Then we get free passes to go to the show. And sometimes I'd see a show twice because at night, like Friday night, my stepfather thought he was doing us a big favor by taking us to the movie and I would go and see the show again.

For my sisters, it was the first time for them so they loved to go show on that basis.

HY: What was the language that you spoke at home? Did your mother speak Korean?

JK: My mother spoke Korean. My stepfather spoke English. He came over when he was real young. In fact, he was a teenager when he came over.

HY: From Korea?

JK: From Korea. He found himself a Hawaiian family to live with. So he had to learn to speak English. With him, we spoke English. My mother [tape inaudible]. So we had a hard time trying to say and find out what she was trying to tell us. We spoke English. To this day, in my generation group, most of my group, which is what you call second-generation Korean, in Hawai'i anyway, can speak Korean. I can't. I may know a few words, but to speak it, I can't.

HY: You can understand . . .

JK: I went to Korean[-language] school. My mother sent me to Korean school when I was twelve years old. I only stayed one year in Korean school. But the school, of course, again, the influence of Pālama—[the school] was right across of Pālama Settlement, where it is today—so (chuckles) saw all the kids playing around at Pālama Settlement, my heart was not in school.

(Laughter)

JK: So I quit when I was twelve. To this day, I say I wish had gone and really learned Korean. See, Korean is just like Japanese, eh? They have the phonics and they have the character. I can read the phonics alphabet. But to put 'em together and make it mean something, I'm lost. So, that's as far as my ethnic-background learning was concerned.

HY: What about other school subjects? Were you interested in something in particular?

JK: Well, I was lucky, I think. I had good teachers.

HY: You remember any of the teachers?

JK: I remember my third grade teacher. She was. . . . Trying to remember her name. She lived in Pālama, in the Pālama area. I didn't know what her background was. All I know is she was a Haole teacher. Fourth grade teacher was a local lady, Quintal. Fifth grade was, I think it was Mrs. Among. I'm not so sure. Sixth grade, there was—we call her a Viking. She was a disciplinarian. But she taught us.

HY: Were they strict at school?

JK: I would say discipline became evident when I was in the fifth grade. Before that, I think was more try to enjoy the activities in school.

HY: How were students disciplined?

JK: I can't recall being disciplined. (HY chuckles.) I was lucky. I seemed to get along with the teachers.

HY: Did you like school?

JK: I liked school. That's one thing. So I did well.

HY: What subjects did you like?

JK: Well, in elementary I liked math. Because the Viking teacher that I had—we called her a Viking teacher—pulled our ears. We learned math. She really pulled our ears. So you don't want to get your ears pulled, you learned the additions and subtractions and multiplication, division. So, I had high grades, even when I went to intermediate school at Kalākaua. I was lucky again. I had good teachers. And I did pretty well. Besides being a so-called smart student, I played sports and I excelled. Basketball, football, track. Starting from Kalākaua I played football, track and basketball at Kalākaua. When I went to McKinley I decided that I better concentrate on one sport so I played basketball. And I did pretty well.

HY: Do you remember some of your coaches? This is within the school programs, is that right?

JK: Right. Kalākaua School, there was one Jimmy Mitchell. He taught us how to play. He taught fundamentals so we learned how to play the game rather than just play the game. In high school there was Frank Hluboky. He coached football and basketball. In high school I played basketball. And they forced me to play, to get involved in track.

HY: Why do you say "forced" you?

JK: 'Cause I didn't want to.

HY: Why is that?

JK: I just wanted to concentrate on basketball. But they found out that I could broad jump. Running broad jump. So, they bought me a pair of shoes. They said, "Here's your shoes."

"No, I don't want. . . ."

'Cause they heard somebody say, while I was fooling around one day, that I jumped twenty-two feet. Running broad jump, twenty-two feet. Those days, that was really good. I said, "No, I didn't jump twenty-two feet." I told the coach. [Frank] Hluboky was coaching and (Ralph) Olsen was our assistant coach. They made me. They made me play. So they bought me my shoes and I did some practice jumps. But I guess I was good enough to qualify in the broad jump. I wasn't good enough to win first place, but I was good enough to broad jump.

HY: Who were you competing against?

JK: Those days, Interscholastic League of Honolulu had McKinley, Roosevelt [High School], Punahou [School], Kam[ehameha] School[s], St. Louis [College], Leilehua [High School], that's about it. After that, they expanded to Farrington [High School], Waialua [High and Intermediate School], and all the other—Kailua [High School], Kaimuki [High School], all the

rest of the schools came into being. When I played there were not that many schools.

HY: At what point did you start going to Pālama Settlement?

JK: Well, I enjoyed the facilities. I would say. . . . Well, let's stop, go the other way around. I think I was in elementary school when I first went to Pālama. This is when I had my teeth fixed.

HY: You went to. . . .

JK: At the dental—Carter . . .

HY: Strong-Carter [Dental Clinic].

JK: . . . Clinic. And we used to go to the clinic that they had there for whatever ailments we had. We didn't have to go to the hospitals. And that was when I was in elementary grades.

HY: How often? Did you just go there when you . . .

JK: Not too often. But we never did get sick. You got sick, you just stayed home. Nobody wanted to get sick. But Pālama had organized activities in sports, which I participated in. I think I started when I was twelve years old. Twelve years would put it in about 1932.

HY: How is it that you started—decided to go there?

JK: Lot of friends were there. So, we went there because, I guess, they offered us a place to play instead of just staying home around the houses, get into more trouble.

HY: Did you go there after school then?

JK: After school, yeah.

HY: What were some of the first activities you did there?

JK: They used to have indoor activities sponsored by the Boys Club of America, where we participated in individual sports—broad jump, basketball shoot, high jump. There were five activities—five sports. And they had also swimming, which, again, I think was Boys Club of America.

Besides that, as you go into the next age groups, there was Junior Olympic games and five sports again. We all participated in those.

HY: You did all of those sports?

JK: We all did that.

HY: Maybe this is a good time to turn the tape over before we run out.

END OF SIDE ONE



## SIDE TWO

HY: . . . about the activities you folks did.

JK: Besides that they offered organized activities such as the Boy Scouts.

HY: Who were some of the coaches that you had early on?

JK: Well, Bill Gee. He's one that I remember as my basketball coach. The men in Pālama like the custodians there actually helped us get involved in sports. There was a guy named John Makolo. He was a locker room custodian. But he helped us with our sports activities. Nelson Kawakami, again, another custodian, he helped us with our swimming efforts. In fact, I think I learned swimming from him.

And Bill Gee, of course, he became a sports editor for the [*Honolulu*] *Star-Bulletin*.

HY: Who was the football coach? Was that Bill Gee, too?

JK: Who was the football coach? I played barefoot football, 120-pound league. Who was the football coach? Can't think, can't think.

The city and county playground division, I guess, organized these sports—football, track, basketball, boxing, and things like that. That's how we got involved in these organized sports. Pālama always put up a team. And, well, we got in there. We'd go to Waipahu to play against the Waipahu people, Waialua. Pālama let us have their trucks, eh? You know, passenger truck. Took us all over the place that we had to go to.

HY: What about your siblings? Did they go to Pālama, too?

JK: Well, Pālama used to have Saturday night movies. We used to go to Saturday night movies. I take my sisters with me. Pālama used to have dancing. I guess you might call that community-type dancing. It was open to the community. My sister, my older sister, used to go to those dances. She'd tell me, "Come along."

"No, not me." I didn't want to play around with girls.

HY: (Chuckles) What about when you were older? Did you . . .

JK: The dances became big community affairs. Had Saturday night movies at the armory and they had dancing at school gymnasiums. So unless you have a gang, I never did go. I didn't care for that type of activity, so I never did. My sister did, though. She and her girlfriends.

Yeah, my sister's life, my oldest sister's life is about the same. She took advantage of the activities that Pālama offered. Sports, dancing, clubs.

HY: What were the club activities like?

JK: In my case, at the boys' clubs, they used to offer drawing. They had a fellow by the name of Conchee. . . . What do you call those people that go in the windows and fix up the displays?

HY: Window dresser?

JK: Yeah. Well, he used to be the window dresser for Liberty House. And he taught us art. Pālama would come up with things like that, you know. "Art might be fun. Let's go try." So we try. Some of us did pretty well. Some of us (chuckles) didn't how to paint a face. But things like that. And [Pālama Settlement] offered use of the recreation hall, hall and rooms, and building, tables.

When I was going to high school, I think I told you I worked for Pālama. There was a program called—I think it was national—NYA, National Youth [Administration]. But it paid us twenty-five cents a day or hour or whatever. That's enough to take care our lunch money. I think NYA was through high school. And when we get to the university level, Bill [Gee] and I were working for Pālama then. Bill published the newspaper for Pālama. I took care of the recreation room, plus I ran the scouting program. This is while I was going through University [of Hawai'i].

After the war started, I think I stayed on for a short while after that and then gave it up because my working schedule could not accommodate the schedule, including all these other things besides. I still played for Pālama. When Pālama didn't have a team, we played for somebody else—basketball. So we drifted away. And after that, more family [activities] than anything else. And picked up new friends, work associates.

HY: Did your parents get involved at Pālama Settlement at all? Did they come to see your games or anything like that?

JK: No, nothing in organized activity. The only thing I know that my mother went out of the family to learn was when she went to try to get her naturalization papers. She went to Farrington [High School], attended the classes there. And she got all her papers to naturalize. During the war, she was working for the church, Red Cross. I don't know what they would be doing—rolling bandages and all that kind of thing. War materials, anyway. Give her a lot of credit. She did a lot of things I didn't know about till later. 'Cause we were too busy ourselves, I guess.

HY: Did they use Pālama Settlement facilities to help with the war effort?

JK: I don't know. They did their war effort at church, through the church organization.

HY: Do you remember what happened to the facilities at Pālama during wartime? Were any of the activities curtailed or used for other things?

JK: Well, during the war, we had a civilian defense unit there. And we were part of it. I was a truck driver. So when the war started, we all took our so-called posts. Assume our duties.

HY: What was your post?

JK: I was supposed to be an ambulance driver.



HY: Did they train you?

JK: Oh, yeah. Train us first aid to take care of the wounded. We acted as wardens at night, be sure that people that are on the road in cars are authorized personnel. Crazy. Could have been shot if the Japanese had infiltrated. I know we had to stop a lot of—we stopped cars, driving through at night.

HY: What would you say to them?

JK: We'd say, "What are you doing?"

They say, "Going home."

"Well, you better go straight home; otherwise, the cops going get you." We get no weapon, no nothing (chuckles).

HY: So they used—this civilian defense unit—they used the facilities at Pālama?

JK: And of course, we were members of the organization. Going back, every Sunday, a bunch of us would get together, play basketball, maybe fifteen, twenty people. 'Cause it takes five guys to form a team. Two teams [start]. The team that makes the first five baskets stays in and continues to play. Other one gets dropped off, and a new team comes in and play. So we'd be playing like that every Sunday.

So, this Sunday morning, when the war started [1941]. . . . Oh, before we played, normally, we used to go Downtown. Where Hawai'i Theatre is, right across, is a small, little restaurant. We go over there, have our breakfast. And then, we'd go back to Pālama and then play basketball.

Well, we did the same thing. I came out from my home early in the morning when the fighting was going on. What I heard was this airplane coming down Pua Lane. And I followed him. "What the heck this guy coming so close?" Next thing I know, [JK makes bombing sound]. Shells falling down on the road.

And we still didn't think anything of it. We went to Pālama, said, "Are we going to play or not?" (HY laughs.) Then finally the coach, Wilder Parker, I guess he was the recognized—he was a worker at Pālama Settlement, I think building superintendent, but he's also the recognized leader, you know. He said, "I think this is the real thing. All you guys man your stations."

So, somebody called down—I was at the gymnasium—somebody called down and said, "Jimmy, you better go get your ambulance and go up the hill, Lanakila [Avenue]." So, my partner and I, our ambulance was a pickup truck with litters. So he and I went up.

There was an address. This car had been bombed. It was one of our shells, I think, from Pearl Harbor. Right through the roof. These guys [who were in the car] were going to work. There was a girl, twelve-year-old girl, that had been strafed by the Japanese, I guess. She was out in the yard. So when we got there, the guys in the car, they all looked dead. The girl was unconscious but still alive. But we could only take two in our litters. So we took the girl and

another guy down to the first aid station at Pālama Settlement. Dropped them off and went back up and got the other two guys. This time we feel they were dead, so we just piled them on. But our observation was wrong. When we had time to talk about it, we asked them, “Those guys [we brought] down, were they still alive?”

“Oh, yeah. All of them were still alive and they all died since you brought them in.”

So while we were playing around with them up there, they were still alive! I don’t know what we were doing then. But it was quite an experience.

HY: Now, at that time, you were a university student, is that right?

JK: Yeah, let’s see, that was December. Yeah, we were in our first semester’s work as a senior.

HY: Had you always known that you wanted to go to university? How is it that you ended up going there?

JK: Yeah, I always wanted to.

HY: Oh, you did?

JK: So, it always in the back of my mind. In fact, I had ambitions. I thought I was a pretty good scholar at high school, National Honor Society member. At first I wanted to be a doctor. But talking about being a doctor and the training, schooling you had to go through, was out of our reach. We couldn’t get anybody to sponsor us to that extent.

HY: You say “out of your reach” for financial reasons?

JK: Financially. There was one guy from Pālama who tried to do it on scholarship. He went to, I think, Boston, Massachusetts. But he died. I think the grind was too much, trying to go to school. He was trying to work at the same time, make money. He can’t do it. Floyd S. Field was the [recreation and club work] director of Pālama Settlement at the time. I think he gave me the breaks at Pālama Settlement. Offered me a job, ‘cause he knew I wanted to go to school. And I thought I’d go and take up engineering. My classmate was going to Colorado School of Mines. Another one was going to Purdue [University], and, “Gee, I’d like to go with you guys.” They told me how much they figured it’d cost to go to school there. They had sponsors. Their family was wealthy enough. They came from different districts. So, I ended up at University [of Hawai‘i] because Pālama gave me an opportunity by offering me a job, part-time job.

HY: What did you study there?

JK: Well, my first two years were in the College of Education. I don’t think I cared for what I thought I wanted. So, coming from Pālama Settlement, seen some of the social workers there. I thought, “Maybe that’s what I should do.” So I took up sociology with the idea that I’d be ending up as a social worker. Till the war broke out. I think I had all the credits I needed to get my sociology major.

HY: Who were some of the social workers who influenced that decision. Do you remember?

JK: Not really. I think just I'd been exposed to Pālama Settlement and the work that was going on.

HY: What was it that they did that you found appealing then?

JK: It was more the assistant side. Not the type that you find social workers doing today. I would say, like the dispensary, the VD [venereal disease] clinic. I think they did some—when you're on probation, they'd have to report to a probation officer, that kind of work, you know. Besides giving us the opportunity of getting into sports and things like that, get out of mischief.

I even took the test when I was working. It took me ten years to get my degree. So, before that time, I applied for probation officer's position. The announcement [didn't] indicate that you needed a degree in sociology, so I applied. I got on the registrar. I was called in for interview. And (Red Simpson), he was in charge of the probation officers, all of whom I know, because they knew me from basketball. Many of the probation officers were sports athletes. They get big guys. So, I was called in for interview. And Red, he was a football referee, too, umpire. He was going through my application and he says, "Oh, what's this? You never did a degree from school."

"No, I never did." I said, "I'm still doing it." Tell him, "I'm still working for it." Well, I had to do it one course at a time, eh? Had to figure, get enough credits to take care of my second semester of work, (senior year).

He told me, "Go get your degree and come back, you got a job."

Oh, I felt fine. And then I continued. I finally got my degree. But finally, the showdown came. I looked at the pay that was being offered. And I look at what was getting. I was making twice as much as a probation officer. Said, "I can't afford to change my vocation." So I never did become a probation officer.

HY: So when the war interrupted your schooling and you began working at Pearl Harbor, what did you do there?

JK: The summer before the war started, I went in. I took the exam for classified laborer. It's just a written exam. I was called in to work that summer. I started working in June, I think, right after the high school closed down. Again, I was lucky. They thought I was a good worker, so the captain offered me a promotion as a storekeeper. At that time, the grade level was CAF-2. You have 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, up the line. So I was torn between that and going to take a job as a probation officer.

HY: You were doing this job while you were in school? Is that right?

JK: No, during the summer. Then I left the job, I went back to school. My last year at university, 1941, eh? I felt to get a degree was better than staying in at the level of pay at that time. So, I let the job go, go on back to school. The war started. I was offered a job (chuckles), I left. Bill Gee and I, we went back to give our lives for our country, war effort.

HY: What kind of duties did you do? What would you do there . . .

JK: Well, let's see. We were CAF-2s, storekeeper.

HY: And what does that entail?

JK: Well, as the material came in, ordered by the navy, we were a supply department. We received the material, had it put away, stored away—located and stored away. And these were parts of airplanes, ships.

HY: Did you keep inventory and that sort of thing?

JK: Right, right. We keep inventory. And we had clerks who reordered material as the need came up. So it was reorder, store, issue. We kept track of who issued the material, too, so we could charge them for it. Went through all the rigmarole, though there was not really money across the table. But account of bills was involved. So rather interesting job. I moved right up the line to grade level 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9. I got drafted. Came back and got my job. Retained my rating.

HY: Were you drafted into the navy?

JK: No, I was drafted into the army. I got drafted. Unfortunately, by the time I was drafted, the war was over. But the father rule was not in effect, yet. I had two children. One more was coming up. So I applied for deferment. But they gave me a one-month deferment so that my wife can have my third child while I was there. Then I got drafted. I think about six months after I was drafted, the rule came out, fathers were exempt. (Chuckles) So I put in for release. So I stayed in the army for one year. But that one year gave me the privilege of being declared a veteran. So I had all the veteran privileges. So I can get buried in Punchbowl. (Chuckles)

HY: Where were you stationed?

JK: That was another good thing. Just before I was going to be called overseas to go to Kwajalein—that's where most of them are going, Kwajalein. . . . Gee, again with my life, you know, I got drafted, right? Training, boot camp, training. They say, "How many people with ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps], put your hands up. How many are now? One year, drop your hand. Two years, drop your hand. Three years, drop your hand. Four years, drop your hand." Only I got ROTC training through university—four years, two years at high school and two years at the university. [JK was told,] "You're acting sergeant."

All I do is call the cadence. I'm lucky. I got relieved of all the chores. You know, everybody had to go through doing things around the camp, eh? So I was lucky. All I had to do was call and march, besides being a regular trainee—learn how to shoot rifle, and things like that. So, they kept me on as cadre to train new recruits. My record finally caught up with me. They wanted me as an MP [military police]. That's a choice job. The only reason why I got to be an MP was the major that I was working for, that was our battalion major, he was going with a girl that used to work for me in the navy. And the girl said, "You know my boss, I think he's stationed with you." So, "You're acting sergeant." (Chuckles)

HY: What was your battalion?

JK: I think was 724[th] MP Battalion. And he wanted to ship me with him as a personnel sergeant. When he left, I had to go with the MP battalion as an acting personnel sergeant only. I wanted to get my rating so that I'll be discharged with a high rating, eh? But that didn't happen. My discharge came through before I got promoted. Technical sergeant, or something like that. So, my life has been pretty easy, lucky.

HY: Where were you stationed?

JK: I was stationed . . .

HY: Were you here?

JK: I was---okay, here's another good thing. I was working down Pearl City for the navy. When I got drafted, I went to, of course, Schofield [Barracks] for training, when I was an acting sergeant there. When I got placed, I got placed (with) the 724th MP Battalion, Pearl City. That's the major (who) was going with this girlfriend. I knew this girl. And when she found out that I was in the same battalion, pulled strings and got me a good job. So, I didn't go overseas. By the time I really had a chance to go overseas, I was out on. . . . What do they call that, now? Some kind of discharge, anyway. I got my dependents discharge, I guess, they call it.

HY: Now, were you able to return to school on a GI Bill?

JK: If I wanted to. But I didn't return to school. While I was working, I finished my requirements for graduation. Got my degree that way. The hardest thing for me, following that route, was to finish my language requirement. I took Spanish. Before the war, I finished my Spanish I and II. I needed the fourth semester work in Spanish. I asked the Spanish teacher, "What is the real requirement? That I know fourth-year Spanish?"

He said, "No. That you know Spanish."

(Laughter)

JK: I said, "How can you expect me, after all these years of no Spanish at all, expect me to take Spanish IV—I think was Spanish IV—and in one semester, be able to pass Spanish?"

He said, "That's the requirement. Spanish IV says that you are capable of writing and reading Spanish."

I said, "Well, if that's the way it is, that's the way it is, I guess." So I had that one credit to get. I had to get a tutor. Went to see her every week. And took the exams when the professor gave me an exam to take. I was doing all right. The tutor that I had was a Spanish girl. She knew Spanish fluent. If it wasn't for her, I don't think I would have made it. She pushed me, she pushed me. She knows Spanish so well, eh? It was hard, but it was a pleasure to hear her tell me why this and that. I took the exam, I made a B.

Professor told me, "You know, I wish all my students were like you."

I said, "It cost me blood, Sir."



(Laughter)

HY: So this is about 1950? Is that right?

JK: Yeah. I was included in the Class of '52.

HY: I think we're almost at the end of this one, too.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 27-39-1-98; SIDE ONE

HY: Okay, maybe you can just go back a bit, back to Pālama time? You know, you mentioned you were very involved in sports at both Pālama and at school. Did you do these things at the same time, then?

JK: Yeah. Pālama was barefoot football, basketball, indoor sports—gymnastics. That's about---and swimming.

HY: Maybe you could just describe, I guess, like a typical day going there. After school you and your friends would go there. You'd get there and what would you do?

JK: Well, depends on the season. Say, if it was basketball. Like most of the time we get there, have to work. Say, we were working. Or you want me go back further?

HY: Maybe when you were younger, then? After school?

JK: After school, we get there. . . . I can't figure the time frames because I know that we'd come home from school, we'd do our homework, after we finish with our homework, we'd go to Pālama. And depending on what we were engaged in, we'd play either basketball or go out and play football until five or six o'clock. Then we go in and take a shower.

HY: Why would you take shower there?

JK: Oh, we're all messed up in playing. Save one at home. But anyway, we took a shower there. And then we go home and have our dinner. More or less, the routine would be like that. At night, we had some classes to go to. Like the art class. We go to art class. If we had time and there was, at the time when I was taking care of the recreation room, we play pool or talk story. Go home about eight o'clock, nine o'clock. That was in the early days.

When I was at the university, I guess, more so than in high school, we'd get there about four o'clock after homework at home. Then go to Pālama. Play basketball. Then do whatever job I had at that time. Like, well, club work, Boy Scouts, or take care of the rec[reation] room. And after that, when you weren't sitting in a group, there was about four or five of us, Bill Gee included, we stay in the front of the gymnasium and we stay there till one or two o'clock in the morning sometimes, just *talk story*. And we do that practically every night.

Initially we even helped the watchman with his rounds. And Pālama Settlement is noted for ghost stories. The first time you make your rounds by yourself, I tell you it's an experience. And the watchman wouldn't tell us about any peculiarity. He let us find out ourselves. For example, in the VD clinic, there's a refrigerator that goes off periodically, vroom. He wouldn't tell us that. But it goes off about the time that you punch a clock in that clinic. And if you're lucky, you punch the clock and the darn refrigerator goes off at the same time. Hooo.

(Laughter)

JK: So, lot of experiences that we can talk about. And we stand around for two, three hours just *talking story*. Talk about ourselves, what we want to do, or what happened during the day. Get to know each other real well.

In the early part of my experience at Pālama, Wilbur S. Wood was the [recreation] director. His son [Ben Wood] is a columnist for the [*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*]. I think he understood us. He gave us a break. He helped us along, offering opportunities to us. He offered a job to me, the part-time jobs that I needed at Pālama. So, we owe a lot to—what we have become—to people like that, to men like that, who were sincere in their efforts to help us. You got to know some pretty good guys. [Samuel] Saffery. . . .

HY: The Reverend Sam Saffery?

JK: Yeah. Good guys. They were strict. They caught us doing something wrong, they tell us. And we'd get (chuckles) our pants kicked or something. And they made us go straight. Wilder Parker, same thing. We were afraid of him, yet we respected him. And when he gave you a kick in the pants, you deserved it. So you don't want to get another one.

HY: Did you feel a sense of pride for being a member of Pālama?

JK: Oh, yeah. Pālama used to have the emblem, winged P, sports. To earn one of those, you have to be a member of the team. When you got one, you were proud of it, very proud of it. You wore a Pālama wing T-shirt, that's it, man. You made it. You made the grade. Lot of them didn't make it. Yeah, well, part of them are not around now. But there's quite a number yet still around. Too bad, I wish—we don't get together, you know. Bill used to try to help us get together, but he since has passed away, eh? When we see the obit columns and see one of ours has gone, we try to get together.

HY: I had heard that your basketball team at one time played the [Harlem] Globetrotters. Is that right?

JK: Oh, actually, the Pālama team, I think we had we had won the local championship. And the Globetrotters had a game—I'm getting ahead of my[self]—anyway, the Globetrotters had a game on Kaua'i. Some of the members of their team did not want to go to Kaua'i. So they asked Bill, how about fill up the difference? So, it was Charlie McKee, myself, Francis Sing, and Frank Puana. They took us along with them.

And those fellows, they're not shrimps like us. (Laughs) Tall guys. [We] put on their uniform. We try to roll up the sleeve. But Abe Saperstein, he was coach of the Globetrotters, Abe Saperstein, saw me doing that. He said, "No, no, no. I want the sleeve to extend as long as it

has to extend. When you catch the ball, you catch where flat." (HY laughs.) The sleeve, like that, you know. Ohhh.

The people from Kaua'i, there was nothing—you could hear a pin drop. They were so astounded by the Globetrotters. But the Globetrotters are there to make you laugh, too. Trying to make those Kaua'i people laugh, ah, the hardest thing to do. But with all the antics the Globetrotters went through, they finally got those guys to laugh a little bit, anyway.

But that's true. I'd say the Globetrotters also stole some of our tricks, Pālama.

HY: Like what?

JK: We had one guy, five feet three inches tall. The only way we could [play against them] we figure we need a basket, we lift him on the basket. So the Globetrotters would come down with the ball, we lift the guy up on the basket, he grab the ball, throw it to us, and the Globetrotters don't get the basket. We run, we go down with the ball. We lift him on our basket, he make a basket for us. That was our trick. And the Globetrotters in subsequent years would pull it out themselves, too.

Yeah, we [a different Pālama team] played against the Globetrotters. Those guys are really good. And us small shrimps. Now, we had no chance against those tall guys now. But our team was, I tell you, Francis Sing, five feet seven [inches]. I am five feet seven [inches]. We play two forwards. Charlie McKee, five [feet] ten [inches]—center. Sylvester Abili, about six feet—guard. [Manuel] Kupahu, five [feet] ten [inches]—guard. Kupahu is dead. Abili is dead. Charlie McKee is dead. Bill Gee is dead. I think Francis and I are the only ones alive now from the Pālama team that played the Globetrotters. Elmo Tomita, I don't know. I think he just died.

HY: What were some of the big rivalries during those days?

JK: Well, really, in basketball, we really don't call it big rivalries. They were teams that we knew were good. Especially during the war when we played during the war. We played against guys like Schofield Dozers, army. And there was a team that came out from Kanē'ohe, marines. I think they were called the Clippers. There was a team that came out from the 7th air force. There was a team that came out from the coast guard. And they played in our senior league in town against us guys, small shrimps.

After the war, Bill Gee, he's a sports writer, editor, went and looked up some of the backgrounds of these guys that we used to play against. And we found out that those guys were three-year all-Americans, intercollegiate all-Americans. Three years, professional all-Americans. No wonder they do what crazy things we learned from them. One time we played the Kanē'ohe Clippers. We were leading with a minute to go. Normally, if you get the ball and you're leading, you stall. Eat up the time. Those guys, they chased us two points, then one point. They stalled. What the heck goes on? They stall. Waited for us to come up to them. But, well, if they want to stall, we'll let them stall, right? 'Cause eat up the time, when stall. Maybe two seconds before the clock, the bell rings so the game over, the guy takes a shot from half court. They're so good the darn thing went in. They beat us by one point. Get no chance to retaliate, see. (HY laughs.) But that's how good they are. So that's the type of competition that we were up against, us local boys. So we gave ourselves consolation that we



played against real good players, real good players.

HY: Did you notice any change in the kind of, I guess, the atmosphere at Pālama Settlement during the years that you were there? Because you started out when you were twelve, then as a young adult you were still there. Did it change?

JK: Oh, yeah. Well, let me say it this way. I think when we were young and at Pālama Settlement, participating and enjoying some activities that we were engaged in, we respected the older guys that went to Pālama. Played basketball, football. And we wanted to be a part of their heritage. 'Cause when you talk about Pālama, you talk about these guys. You want to be one of those that they talk about later on. And so we tried our best to become a part of that. And we followed those guys around.

HY: Guys like who? Who would be a big idol for you?

JK: My idol?

HY: Yeah. I mean, who were some of these guys that you just thought were really something?

JK: Well, I tell you, all of them were good. But the one that I owe a lot to is Bill. Bill Gee. I used to go around with him, like Francis Sing and I used to go around together. He taught me a lot. And of course, he scolded me. He gave me fatherly advice, too. (Chuckles)

HY: He advised you in other ways besides sports, then?

JK: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

HY: Talked to you about life.

JK: And I learned from his experiences with people. Girlfriends.

HY: What about girls that went to Pālama Settlement? It sounds like you guys kinda hung out with the boys.

JK: Not really.

HY: Were there girls involved in . . .

JK: There were girls that came to Pālama and hung around Pālama like the boys. They stayed in their side of the field. Like, for example, swimming. There were some girls that were good swimmers. But at our age, teenagers especially, we admired the girls. Because I guess you learn about girls, eh? So we admired them if they were good. Hey, we admired them for that. As you grew older, then the girls became something else. Then you got married. But lot of the boys didn't get married until late in life. In fact, I was surprised that certain individuals finally got married.

HY: Well, did you ever play sports with girls or was it real separate?

JK: Separate. No, we didn't. Well, I have to take that back. Tennis. We played tennis with the

girls. Mixed tennis. And we played a pretty strong game. Most of us, I think, claimed that we played class B tennis. We never did play in the big tournaments, though. Class B. Pālama had two tennis courts. We made good use of it. Those that knew how to participate and take advantage of what Pālama had to offer were lucky. Lot of things that we did there that I don't think many [other] adolescents, especially adolescents, were lucky to participate. We were lucky because we got training, eh? The old-timers would give us training that we need.

HY: You know, you started to tell me about how you think maybe it had changed some. When you were younger you really looked up to the older guys? How did that change during the time you were there?

JK: Well, I guess what I'm trying to say there is, as I grew older moving from an adolescent to young [man]. I used to admire the old-timers for what they achieved and how well they did it. As I move into their age and I grew older, I guess most of us lost touch with the younger people. Maybe it's because of the war. We had other things to worry about. Maybe because we got married and had our own children to worry about. Maybe at that time Pālama wasn't offering as much as they're offering now. There're other things besides maybe that was more important which we were not a part of. We had other things. So I think that our group left Pālama.

And the new development at Pālama was something that, you know, little different from what we were exposed to. For example, musicians that they have now. They're good and they're teaching younger people the way of life. We didn't have any—I wouldn't say we didn't have the opportunity, but I wasn't exposed to something like that. We went our way. We lost touch. I did, anyway. I can't think of anybody else who really got into it like we did, except maybe in different endeavors now.

HY: Well, you mentioned that you were helping with scouting. Did you feel that they were different than you or . . .

JK: All the boys I had—troop 30, 21, 70, and I think I had two cub packs—all young people, I met 'em afterwards, but the rest of them, I don't know. It [would] be nice to know them, but I've lost them. One guy I know, he's a doctor. One of the boys became a doctor. How many more became doctors or lawyers that I didn't have the real opportunity of knowing? In fact, the doctor was one that operated on me.

(Laughter)

JK: Maybe it's a good thing that I was known. Because Dr. [Richard] Mamiya—you know Dr. Mamiya? Dr. Mamiya is one of the best heart surgeons there was when open-heart surgery became the thing. He knows who I am.

HY: From Pālama?

JK: From Pālama.

HY: Is that because your athletics . . .

JK: Athletic participation. Basketball. Dr. Mamiya was also an athlete. He was a football player for

St. Louis, I think. But he's a few years younger than I. So when he operated on me, my open-heart, my bypass, he told me, "Jimmy, we were going to do only four bypasses on you. But when I went in, I saw two more that I thought I'd help you with." So he did. I got my bypass, 1977. This is 1997—'98. Twenty years. They used to tell us, people with bypass operations, longevity is ten years. So, I'm lucky. Again, I'm lucky. I can't squawk about my life.

HY: Did you ever participate in any of the camping activities? You know, Pālama-by-the-Sea?

JK: Oh, yeah. We used to go there every summer. In fact, when I was a kid, when I was an adolescent growing up, we used to look forward to those camping excursions at Pālama-by-the-Sea. One thing that you get exposure to, you know, the military camp—beach right along side of it. There's a military army camp. We used to mingle with the crowd there. All the soldiers and their families. And us local boys from Pālama-by-the-Sea, we walk down the beach and join with them.

HY: What did you think of them?

JK: Well, we thought they were Haoles.

HY: And what did that mean to you?

JK: At that time, funny, at that time we thought they were better than us.

HY: Why do you think that was that you felt that way?

JK: I think it's because of our parents. You know, who on the plantations, the leaders in the plantations, the *lunas*? All the Haoles. So they were, I guess, considered to be better. Until you yourself grew up and mingle with them and say, "I'm better basketball player than you are."

(Laughter)

JK: Because I know we played against Leilehua [High School]. Leilehua, Haoles. That's children of the military at Schofield [Barracks], eh?

HY: So, you were out at [the beach] you'd go into the camp?

JK: Well, when you're down the beach—not participated in, not utilize their facility, but we go down the beach and eye the girls up.

(Laughter)

JK: Now, actually, I think we had a reason. We knew one thing. We knew we knew the waters better than they did. We knew there was a current that used to run from north to south along the beach area. So we walk from Pālama-by-the-Sea up to maybe a hundred yards before we reach the military beach. And we watch, every summer, we watch somebody yell for help. Every summer, somebody get drifting out, they start yelling. And when they start yelling for help, they're just right in front of us. Well, in the water we go, we bring 'em in. Every summer, we wait for that occasion. (HY laughs.) We knew somebody's going to yell for help.

HY: Was this usually somebody military?

JK: Yeah.

HY: So you'd be a hero then?

JK: Yeah, well, we think we are, eh? They should know. The lifeguards at that beach should know. There's a current that runs down. And all they had to do is keep on going this way, don't go sideways, they'd be all right. So when we get down there we pull 'em in this way. So every summer we wait for that to occur. Stinkers, yeah?

(Laughter)

JK: But that gave us excitement. We had fun. I think we were lucky to have grown up in Pālama at the time we did. I think war had a lot to do with changing Pālama's purpose. I think so.

From what I read, what's going on in Pālama now, the better people are running the show. But the people that ran the show at the time that we were there fulfilled our needs, anyway. Fulfilled our needs. Gave us, I think, I can say that they gave me an opportunity to do what I had to do. The guys that I know, my contemporaries, I can't think of anyone except maybe one guy, everybody has come through.

Not like the one guy that we knew. We go play barefoot football. So we have to go to another field to play somebody else. Go in the locker room, change our clothes. And all we have, maybe, is twenty-five cents in our pocket. When we come back we can buy a sandwich. When we come back, take a shower, put our clothes on, go and feel for our money. If you had twenty-five cents in your pocket, you lucky. But the guy who [took our money] left us ten cents and took the fifteen cents. (Laughs) We knew who it was, too. Oh, I tell you. We figured out it must be somebody we knew 'cause they were kind enough to leave us something to eat.

(Laughter)

JK: Well, that's the way Pālama was, some good and some bad. Sometimes now when you look back, you'd like to get together with the boys again, but. . . . We played Hilo High [School], McKinley . . .

HY: Oh, you took neighbor island trips? Or, this was through your school then?

JK: Yeah, through school. But again, you say through school, we learned how to play basketball at Pālama. Without the exposure at Pālama, we'd probably never make it in high school. Because our coach in high school, [Frank] Hluboky much as I like the guy, he did not teach us how to play. He was the one who said, "You go in. You come out. Now go in and make a basket." Baseball, he knew what he was doing in baseball. But in basketball, he was lucky he had the caliber of people that he needed to play basketball.

HY: So, fundamentals, you learned at Pālama?

JK: From Pālama, [and] from a guy like Jimmy Mitchell from Kalākaua School. He taught us the

fundamentals at the time that we needed it. When we moved to Pālama, we were taught the same fundamentals. Emphasized, "This is the way you do, not that way, this way." So we got to be better players. And Bill, Bill Gee, our coach, when he taught, he taught us basic fundamentals. There was a Haole coach, too, who also gave us the same fundamentals—trying to think of his name. Anyway, we got the basics at Pālama. And I think I can say that.

We also got some basic learning on how to live at Pālama from who we considered leaders at that time. And they could have been the locker room custodians. Two of them.

Hey, when I was a kid, I think under twelve years, I lived in a court adjacent to Pālama. Makolo, John Makolo, one locker room custodian, caught us climbing the plum tree. Now, we got no business climbing plum trees. All we do is creating a hazard for Pālama. We fall off and what? He came and caught us. He took us in the locker room and pull our ears. I thought my ears going fall down. But I never forget it. I never forget a lesson he taught me. And when people tell you not to do something that you shouldn't be doing, don't do it. Because they have a reason for telling you that. And so, I think I learned a lot.

And so, what we learned at Pālama we carried through our high school years and university. All the sporting activities that we went through with other community teams. Because we played with Kalihi team, Waipahu team, Waiialua teams. Swam against them. In swimming competition, we were against the whole United States. Because they were with the Boys Club [of America]. Pālama wasn't the only one.

Yeah, Wilbur Wood was a good man. When he came to Honolulu, he brought his family with him. He had, I don't know how many children he had. He had two children or three children. I knew his son [Ben Wood] when the boy was young and we were in our late teens, I guess. But I don't know him today, which is a pity, because his father did so much for us. And he's a columnist for the [*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*].

HY: So moving up again in time, let's see, you had finished your schooling then at UH after you were discharged and you started working again at Pearl Harbor. You said the pay was not very good when you looked into [becoming a] probation officer.

JK: I think when I applied for the probation officer's job, I was told that I had to get my degree, plus the fact that I was making pretty good pay, I think I decided, forget about that avenue and stay with what I was doing.

HY: But you [still] wanted to finish your degree.

JK: One of the officers that I worked for, he was the one that said, "Jimmy, I want you to go back and get your degree."

I said, "Aye aye, Sir."

So he gave me time off when I needed time off.

HY: And that's when you finished your Spanish?

JK: Yeah, 'cause I never thought I'd make it with Spanish hanging on me.

HY: So what were your duties, then, at Pearl Harbor after you finished school? I know you started at shopkeeper.

JK: Well, I moved up. I moved up in the same area in supply, except I managed to be promoted to higher paid positions. When you consider that the supply center had 3,000 workers, and I was in charge of a segment that had around 300 people working under me. And then I moved up into a staff position. Instead of operational position, I moved into a staff position. And the pay got bigger. Then I got involved in data processing. And I installed a new system for the navy down here. Went to Washington to be trained. Pay got bigger. Yeah, I ended up a civilian in charge of data processing for the supply center, Pearl Harbor.

HY: Is that the position you retired from?

JK: Mm hmm [yes].

HY: And that was in '81, is that right?

JK: Yeah.

HY: I think we're going to run out of tape again.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

HY: Okay, so you retired, then in '81. And so now you're here in 'Aiea. When did you move here?

JK: Well, I knew my wife a long time ago. Even before my first wife died. So, when you said when did I move up here, it depends on how you look at it. I was lucky enough to be allowed to visit. My wife lived here when Pearl Harbor was bombed. She was still going to school, I think, high school. She's my second wife. I knew her when she first worked for me at Pearl Harbor. We had one girl together. And my daughter is forty-eight years old, I think. My oldest boy is fifty-something, I guess. One is forty, forty-two, or forty? Second boy is fifty-two, I guess. I have a daughter who is fifty-plus. So I had a very interesting life.

HY: Is there anything that you want to add, particularly about your Pālāma Settlement time? Any story or memory that we didn't talk about?

JK: Not really. I can't really think of anything that I'd like to add to what I've already said.

HY: After the war, then, you stopped coming to Pālāma Settlement.

JK: That kind of about sums it up. I stopped coming to Pālāma. Well, let me say it this way. I played for a team that won a local championship, basketball, senior league championship in 1947. I think I stopped going to Pālāma about then. I may have gone there a year or two later. Maybe up to '48. But nothing past '50, yeah? I start losing contact in '50. And I guess that's about it.



HY: Okay. Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

# **Reflections of Pālama Settlement**

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